We claim:

1. A method of promoting hair thickness in a subject, comprising:

identifying a subject in need of promoting hair thickness; and

increasing the level of a VEGF protein in the subject,

thereby promoting hair thickness in a subject.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the level of VEGF protein is increased by administering to the subject a VEGF polypeptide or a functional fragment or analog thereof.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the level of VEGF protein is increased by administering to the subject a compound which induces VEGF.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the compound is a polypeptide which increases VEGF expression.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the compound is a transition metal.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein the compound is administered topically.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the level of VEGF protein is increased by administering to the subject a nucleotide sequence encoding a VEGF polypeptide or functional fragment or analog thereof.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the nucleotide sequence encoding a VEGF polypeptide or functional fragment or analog thereof is administered to a keratinocyte.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the nucleotide sequence encoding a VEGF polypeptide or functional fragment or analog thereof is administered to a cell obtained from the subject.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the cell is a keratinocyte.

11. A method of promoting hair growth in a subject, comprising:

identifying a subject in need of promoting hair growth; and

increasing the level of a VEGF protein in the subject,

thereby promoting hair growth in a subject.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the level of VEGF protein is increased by administering to the subject a VEGF polypeptide or a functional fragment or analog thereof.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the level of VEGF protein is increased by administering to the subject a compound which induces VEGF.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the compound is a polypeptide which increases VEGF expression.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the compound is a transition metal.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the compound is administered topically.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein the level of VEGF protein is increased by administering to the subject a nucleotide sequence encoding a VEGF polypeptide or functional fragment or analog thereof.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the nucleotide sequence encoding a VEGF polypeptide or functional fragment or analog thereof is administered to a keratinocyte.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the nucleotide sequence encoding a VEGF polypeptide or functional fragment or analog thereof is administered to a cell obtained from the subject.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the cell is a keratinocyte.

21. A method of inhibiting hair growth or hair thickness in a subject, comprising:

identifying a subject in need of inhibiting hair growth or thickness; and

decreasing VEGF activity in the subject,

thereby inhibiting hair growth or thickness in a subject.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein VEGF activity is decreased by administering to the subject a compound which inhibits VEGF.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the compound is a polypeptide.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the compound is a nucleotide sequence which causes a decrease in VEGF expression.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein the compound is administered topically.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein the compound is an anti-VEGF antibody.

27. A method of evaluating whether a subject is at risk for hair loss, comprising:

providing a cell or tissue sample from the subject; and

detecting a misexpression in a VEGF gene of the subject, wherein decreased expression of VEGF in the subject compared to a control is indicative of a risk of hair loss in the subject.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the cell is follicular keratinocyte.

29. A method of selecting a compound that modulates hair growth or hair thickness, comprising:

providing a test compound; and

evaluating the ability of the test compound to modulate VEGF activity, wherein if the compound modulates VEGF activity, it is selected,

thereby selecting a compound that modulates hair growth or hair thickness.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein evaluating the ability of the test compound to modulate VEGF activity comprises:

providing a cell, a tissue, or a subject;

treating the cell, tissue, or subject with a test compound; and

determining the level of VEGF activity in the cell tissue or subject as compared to a control.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the cell is a keratinocyte.